

Charlton Parish Council Policy on War Memorial Care (version 1, November 2020)

As Custodians of the Charlton War Memorial the Parish Council is responsible for its care and maintenance. What follows only relates to the memorial itself and does not consider care of the garden or retaining wall.

Cleaning – Historic England suggests that an appropriate cleaning strategy is established which achieves the desired effect while minimising any alteration to the underlying material.¹ i.e. the aim is not to return the memorial to an “as new” condition but to prevent deterioration of the material and the inscriptions.

A test clean was carried out in June 2019. Moss and dried grass cuttings were removed from two small areas of the plinth and the areas cleaned with water and a non-metallic brush. The results were positive making the stone lighter while retaining the character of a 100-year old structure.

In July 2019 the Parish Council agreed that a full clean of the memorial should be undertaken in October i.e. after the last grass cut and before the annual Armistice Service. It would then become an annual event, although it was not anticipated that a clean would be required every year.

Additionally, in Spring (either as part of removing the wreaths or during a Village Clean-up) the memorial would be checked twice a year for weeds and moss.

Display of Wreaths – Each November wreaths are laid at the memorial. These are subsequently secured around the memorial in a vertical position. Some materials, such as wire, can cause damage to the stonework and there is also a risk of damage from water becoming trapped behind the wreaths.

In May 2019, the Parish Council agreed that it would use twine or string to attach the wreaths to the memorial and additionally to position them below the layer which contains the inscriptions.

Removal of Wreaths – The question for custodians is how long the wreaths should remain on the memorial after the Remembrance Service. This is a sensitive issue, and the advice of War Memorials Trust is that the decision on when to remove them should be taken after consultation with the local community and any other interested parties. Once agreed it should be publicised in a suitable public place e.g. council website, noticeboard.

At their meeting in May 2019, the Parish Council proposed that the wreaths should be removed at Easter. This idea was put to Lord Suffolk who supported it and an item placed in

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conserving-war-memorials-cleaning/> - page 6

the Parish Chat seeking responses from the members of the parish. The policy was formally adopted at the September 2019 meeting.

Note: Due to the VE Day 75 commemoration in 2020, the PC subsequently agreed that the wreaths would remain in place until after that event.

Further Information

The Charlton War Memorial is recorded on the following websites:

www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk – Reference number 156577

www.iwm.org.uk – Reference Number 23940

www.oodwooc.co.uk/ph_Charlton_wmcm.html

The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre holds an image of the war memorial (and the wall which encloses it) from around the 1920s/30s (reference number P19324)

In 2016 the Parish Council discussed whether to apply to English Heritage for the memorial to be listed, no decision was taken.

There are other war memorials in the Village, not the responsibility of the Parish Council, namely the WW1 Roll of Honour and WW2 Plaque in the Village Hall and the Memorial Window in the Church.